III.—CHANGE IN THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

MR. SPEAKER :—" Before we pass on to the next item in the Agenda, I must tell the House that I have received a letter from the United Democratic Front. The letter states that ' the general body of the United Democratic Front Legislature Party has to-day resolved to authorize Mr. P. Ramamurthi to act as Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly in the place of Mr. T. Viswanatham, resigned from the United Democratic Front.' I must tell the House that the power to determine the party which should form the official Opposition is in the hands of the Speaker. To say which gentleman is to be the Leader of the Opposition is also in the hands of the Speaker. By this letter, they have usurped this power of the Speaker. In England, the official Leader of the Opposition is statutorily recognized by the Act, known as the Ministers of the Crown Act passed in 1937. According to this Act, the Speaker is given power to say which party forms the official Opposition and which gentleman is to be the official Leader of the Opposition. In England he is given a salary. I am saying all these things only to show that they have, by this letter, usurped the power of the Chair. Anyhow, I shall give my consideration to the letter.

" Now, let us pass on to the next item on the Agenda, viz., the Madras Motor Vehicles (Taxation of Passengers and Goods) Bill, 1952."

IV.—GOVERNMENT BILL.

THE MADRAS MOTOR VEHICLES (TAXATION OF PASSENGERS AND GOODS) BILL, 1952.

* SRI T. VISWANATHAM :—" Before we pass on to the next item, I want to raise a point of order. Sir, you may remember, I raised a point of order on a previous occasion and you were pleased to say that if I put it in writing, you will consider it. I did it, Sir. The Bill as originally published was referred to a Select Committee which also made its report. The Chairman was authorized to sign the report on behalf of the members of the Select Committee. The Legislative Assembly appointed the Select Committee and it is the duty of the Chairman of the Select Committee to report to this House and place the Committee's report before the House. But, we find that the Committee's report was simply placed on the table of the House just as any other paper. Sir, I think this is a point of order on which you must give your ruling. Anyhow, the Chairman ought to have reported to this House. If, however, the Government are not prepared to accept the Bill, as amended by the Select Committee, then it is their sweet will and pleasure to withdraw the Bill and introduce a new Bill. I want your ruling on the matter, Sir."

MR. SPEAKER :—" The Leader of the Opposition wrote a letter to me and I was also thinking of writing to him. But later, I thought that it was better to give a ruling in the House so that all hon. Members may know what the matter is. What the